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THE KINGS MAIESTIES DECLARATION to His Subiects, CONCERNING lawfull SPORTS to *bee vſed.*

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M.DC.XXXIII.

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By the King.

OVr Deare Father of blessed Memory, in his returne from Scotland, comming through Lancashire, found that his Subiects were debarred from Lawful Recreations vpon Sundayes after Euening Prayers ended, and vpon Holy dayes: And Hee prudently considered, that if these times were taken

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from them, the meaner sort who labour hard all the weeke, should haue no Recreations at all to refresh their spirits. And after His returne, Hee farther saw that His loyall Subiects in all other parts of His Kingdome did suffer in the same kinde, though perhaps not in the same degree: And did therefore in His Princely wisedome, publish a Declaration to all his louing Subiects concerning lawfull Sports to be vsed at such times, which was printed and published by His royall Commandement in the yeere 1618. *In the Tenor which hereafter followeth.*

¶ By

¶ By the King.

WHereas vpon Our *returne the laſt yere out of Scotland, We did publiſh Our Pleaſure touching the recreations of Our people in thoſe parts vnder Our hand: For ſome cauſes Vs thereunto mooving, Wee haue thought good to command theſe Our Directions then giuen in* Lancaſhire *with a few words thereunto added, and moſt appliable*

pliable to these parts of Our Realmes, to bee published to all Our Subiects.

Whereas Wee did iustly in Our *Progresse through* Lancashire, *rebuke some Puritanes and precise people, and tooke order that the like vnlawfull carriage should not bee vsed by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and vnlawfull punishing of Our good people for vsing their lawfull Recreations, and honest exercises vpon Sundayes and other Holy dayes, after the afternoone Sermon or Seruice: Wee now finde that two sorts of people wherewith that Countrey is much infected, (Wee meane*

Papists

Papiſts and Puritanes) *haue malicioufly traduced and calumniated thoſe Our iuſt and honourable proceedings. And therefore leſt Our reputation might vpon the one ſide* (*though innocently*) *haue ſome aſperſion layd vpon it, and that vpon the other part Our good people in that Countrey be miſled by the miſtaking and miſinterpretation of Our meaning: We haue therefore thought good hereby to cleare and make Our pleaſure to be manifeſted to all Our good People in thoſe parts.*

It is true that at Our firſt entry to this Crowne, and Kingdome,

Wee were informed, and that too truely, that Our County of Lancashire *abounded more in Popish Recusants then any County of England, and thus hath still continued since to Our great regreet, with little amendmẽt, saue that now of late, in Our last riding through Our said County, Wee find both by the report of the Iudges, and of the Bishop of that dioeesse, that there is some amendment now daily beginning, which is no small contentment to Vs.*

The report of this growing amendment amongst them, made Vs the more sorry, when with Our owne Eares We

heard

heard the generall complaint of Our people, that they were barred from all lawfull Recreation, & exercise vpon the Sundayes afternoone, after the ending of all Diuine Seruice, which cannot but produce two euils: The one, the hindering of the conuersion of many, whom their Priests will take occasion hereby to vexe, perswading them that no honest mirth or recreation is lawfull or tolerable in Our Religion, which cannot but breed a great discontentment in Our peoples hearts, especially of such as are peraduenture vpon the point of turning; The other inconuenience is, that this prohibition

barreth the common and meaner ſort of people from vſing ſuch exerciſes as may make their bodies more able for Warre, when Wee or Our Succeſſours ſhall haue occaſion to vſe them. And in place thereof ſets vp filthy tiplings and drunkenneſſe, & breeds a number of idle and diſcontented ſpeeches in their Alehouſes. For when ſhall the common people haue leaue to exerciſe, if not vpon the Sundayes & holydaies, ſeeing they muſt apply their labour, & win their liuing in all working daies?

Our expreſſe pleaſure therefore is, that the Lawes of Our Kingdome, & Canons of Our Church be aſwell obſerued

ſerued in that Countie, as in all other places of this Our Kingdome. And on the other part, that no lawfull Recreation ſhall bee barred to Our good People, which ſhall not tend to the breach of Our aforeſayd Lawes, and Canons of Our Church: which to expreſſe more particularly, Our pleaſure is, That the Biſhop, and all other inferiour Churchmen, and Churchwardens, ſhall for their parts bee carefull and diligent, both to inſtruct the ignorant, and conuince and reforme them that are miſ-led in Religion, preſenting them that will not conforme themſelues, but obſtinately ſtand out to

Our Iudges and Iuſtices: Whom We likewiſe command to put the Law in due execution againſt them.

Our pleaſure likewiſe is, That the Biſhop of that Dioceſſe take the like ſtraight order with all the Puritanes and Preciſians within the ſame, either conſtraining them to conforme themſelues, or to leaue the County according to the Lawes of Our Kingdome, and Canons of Our Church, and ſo to ſtrike equally on both hands, againſt the contemners of Our Authority, and aduerſaries of Our Church. And as for Our good peoples lawfull Recreation, Our pleaſure likewiſe is, That after

the end of Diuine Seruice, Our good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreation, Such as dauncing, either men or women, Archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmelesse Recreation, nor from hauing of May-Games, Whitson Ales, and Morris-dances, and the setting vp of Maypoles & other sports therewith vsed, so as the same be had in due & conuenient time, without impediment or neglect of Diuine Seruice: And that women shall haue leaue to carry rushes to the Church for the decoring of it, according to their old custome. But with-

all

all We doe here account still as prohibited all vnlawfull games to bee vsed vpon Sundayes onely, as Beare and Bullbaitings, Interludes, and at all times in the meaner sort of people by Law prohibited, Bowling.

And likewise We barre from this benefite and liberty, all such knowne recusants, either men or women, as will abstaine from comming to Church or diuine Seruice, being therefore vnworthy of any lawfull recreation after the said Seruice, that will not first come to the Church, and serue God: *Prohibiting in like sort the said Recreations to any that, though conforme in Re-*

ligion,

ligion, are not present in the Church at the Seruice of GOD, *before their going to the said Recreations. Our pleasure likewise is, That they to whom it belongeth in Office, shall present and sharpely punish all such as in abuse of this Our liberty, will vse these exercises before the ends of all Diuine Seruices for that day. And We likewise straightly command, that euery person shall resort to his owne Parish Church to heare Diuine Seruice, and each Parish by it selfe to vse the said Recreation after Diuine Seruice. Prohibiting likewise any Offensiue weapons to bee carried or*

vsed in the said times of Recreations. And Our pleasure is, That this Our Declaration shall bee published by order from the Bishop of the Diocesse, through all the Parish Churches, and that both Our Iudges of Our Circuit, and Our Iustices of Our Peace be informed thereof.

Giuen at Our Mannour of Greenwich the foure and twentieth day of May, in the sixteenth yeere of Our Raigne of England, France and Ireland, and of Scotland the one and fiftieth.

NOw out of a like pious Care for the seruice of God, and for suppressing of any humors that oppose trueth, and for the Ease, Comfort, & Recreation of Our well deseruing People, Wee doe ratifie and publish this Our blessed Fathers Declaration: The rather because of late in some Counties of Our Kingdome, Wee finde that vnder pretence of taking away abuses, there hath been a generall forbidding, not onely of ordinary meetings, but of the Feasts of the Dedication of the Churches, commonly

called Wakes. Now Our expresse will and pleasure is, that these Feasts with others shall bee obserued, and that Our Iustices of the peace in their seuerall Diuisions shall looke to it, both that all disorders there, may be preuented or punished, and that all neighbourhood and freedome, with manlike and lawfull Exercises bee vsed. And Wee farther Command Our Iustices of Assize in their seuerall Circuits, to see that no man doe trouble or molest any of Our loyall and duetifull people, in or for their lawfull Recreations, hauing first done their duetie to God, and continuing in

obedience

obedience to Vs and Our Lawes. And of this Wee command all Our Iudges, Iuſtices of the Peace, as well within Liberties as without, Maiors, Bayliffes, Conſtables, and other Officers, to take notice of, and to ſee obſerued, as they tender Our diſpleaſure. And Wee farther will, that publication of this Our Command bee made by order from the Biſhops through all the Pariſh Churches of their ſeuerall Dioceſſe reſpectiuely.

Giuen at Our Palace of Weſtminſter the eighteenth day of October, in the ninth yeere of Our Reigne.

God ſaue the King.

103/1924 } v. f. Leighton
22 Aug. 1924.